

# MIRROR IMAGES

**New Reflections on Teacher Leadership**

**Casey Reason / Clair Reason**



# Contents

<b>Preface</b>	<b>vii</b>
The Purpose	vii
The Mirror	vii
Old Reflections, Definitions, and Misconceptions of Teacher Leadership	viii
Perfect Timing or a Perfect Storm?	xii
Organization and Application of the Book	xv
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>xvii</b>
<b>About the Authors</b>	<b>xix</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Profiles in Teacher Leadership Today</b>	<b>1</b>
She Changed Their Lives and Found Herself	1
They Learned to Live the Lesson	5
Her Quiet Diligence	7
The Master Motivator	11
<b>Chapter 2. The Learning Advocate</b>	<b>15</b>
The Learning Advocate Defined	15
Why We Need the Learning Advocate	15
The Learning Advocate: Advantages and Benefits	16
Looking in the Mirror: Becoming the Learning Advocate	19
Strategies for Becoming and Supporting the Learning Advocate	22
Transcendent Teacher Leaders in Action: The Learning Advocate	31
Conclusions	32

<b>Chapter 3. The Believer</b>	<b>33</b>
The Believer Defined	33
Why We Need the Believer	34
The Believer: Advantages and Benefits	34
Looking in the Mirror: Becoming the Believer	36
Strategies for Becoming and Supporting the Believer	39
Transcendent Teacher Leaders in Action: The Believer	45
Conclusions	46
<b>Chapter 4. The Transformationalist</b>	<b>49</b>
The Transformationalist Defined	49
Why We Need the Transformationalist	49
The Transformationalist: Advantages and Benefits	50
Looking in the Mirror: Becoming the Transformationalist	51
Strategies for Becoming and Supporting the Transformationalist	54
Transcendent Teacher Leaders in Action: The Transformationalist	59
Conclusions	61
<b>Chapter 5. The Synergizer</b>	<b>63</b>
The Synergizer Defined	63
Why We Need the Synergizer	63
The Synergizer: Advantages and Benefits	64
Looking in the Mirror: Becoming the Synergizer	66
Strategies for Becoming and Supporting the Synergizer	68
Transcendent Teacher Leaders in Action: The Synergizer	72
Conclusions	73
<b>Chapter 6. The Method Master</b>	<b>75</b>
The Method Master Defined	75
Why We Need the Method Master	76
The Method Master: Advantages and Benefits	76

Looking in the Mirror: Becoming the Method Master	78
Strategies for Becoming and Supporting the Method Master	80
Transcendent Teacher Leaders in Action: The Method Master	88
Conclusions	89
<b>Chapter 7. The Fully Invested Owner</b>	<b>91</b>
The Fully Invested Owner Defined	91
Why We Need the Fully Invested Owner	92
The Fully Invested Owner: Advantages and Benefits	92
Looking in the Mirror: Becoming the Fully Invested Owner	95
Strategies for Becoming and Supporting the Fully Invested Owner	98
Transcendent Teacher Leaders in Action: The Fully Invested Owner	104
Conclusions	105
<b>Chapter 8. The Present Balance Keeper</b>	<b>107</b>
The Present Balance Keeper Defined	107
Why We Need the Present Balance Keeper	108
The Present Balance Keeper: Advantages and Benefits	109
Looking in the Mirror: Becoming the Present Balance Keeper	112
Strategies for Becoming and Supporting the Present Balance Keeper	114
Transcendent Teacher Leaders in Action: The Present Balance Keeper	121
Conclusions	122
<b>Chapter 9. The Servant</b>	<b>125</b>
The Servant Defined	125
Why We Need the Servant	125
The Servant: Advantages and Benefits	126

Looking in the Mirror: Becoming the Servant	129
Strategies for Becoming and Supporting the Servant	132
Transcendent Teacher Leaders in Action: The Servant	137
Conclusions	138
<b>Chapter 10. The Inquisitor</b>	<b>141</b>
The Inquisitor Defined	141
Why We Need the Inquisitor	141
The Inquisitor: Advantages and Benefits	142
Looking in the Mirror: Becoming the Inquisitor	145
Strategies for Becoming and Supporting the Inquisitor	147
Transcendent Teacher Leaders in Action: The Inquisitor	155
Conclusions	156
<b>Chapter 11. The Detective</b>	<b>159</b>
The Detective Defined	159
Why We Need the Detective	160
The Detective: Advantages and Benefits	160
Looking in the Mirror: Becoming the Detective	162
Strategies for Becoming and Supporting the Detective	164
Transcendent Teacher Leaders in Action: The Detective	171
Conclusions	172
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>177</b>

## PERFECT TIMING OR A PERFECT STORM?

Teacher leadership is a concept that many of us have embraced for some time. In this section, we present six current trends in education and discuss the degree to which teacher leadership will be important in responding to these shifts. While the argument can be made that teacher leadership has always been important, there are certainly a number of trends emerging today that make the establishment of teacher leadership more important than ever!

### **Trend # 1: Greater Levels of Complexity in the Profession**

Our classrooms are more heterogeneous than ever before (George, 2005). This means that our teachers and students come to school with greater dissimilarity in their personal experiences, cultural context, and language. Greater diversity will ultimately result in an improved learning environment. Moving away from a homogeneous perspective is a challenge for many schools and the complexity of dealing with this evolution will certainly require leadership. It will also test our capacity to change at the granular level; and it will be important that teachers themselves are at the heart of this change.

### **Trend # 2: Continued Focus on Accountability and Results**

As the era of accountability evolves, teachers will increasingly be required to own their results. To do that, teacher leaders must take part in constructing the vision and establishing an action plan to achieve new outcomes (Leithwood, 1995). Teacher leadership is a perfect approach to create these deeper levels of ownership and accountability.

### **Trend # 3: The Overwhelming Trend Toward Personalization**

Technology has allowed us to personalize our lives in unique ways. We can get our news from sources that match our beliefs. Our computer desktops and the cell phones in our pockets allow us to make personal our learning and communication spaces. In a culture that involves high levels of personalization, we are sure to be more resistant to change that is top-down and doesn't consider personal thoughts and ideas.

It has long been acknowledged that leaders are more successful when they can connect on an individual level with those who represent an integral part of the change process. In a culture where we have higher expectations for personalization and involvement, the need for teacher leaders will be greater than ever as we will grow to expect them to either lead the change themselves or be instrumentally involved with whatever changes are necessary in leading schools.

#### **Trend #4: Embarking on the Age of Learning**

In an age of information where bodies of knowledge grow exponentially every year, our culture will become increasingly focused on learning capacity and opportunities (Bonk, 2009). The future will bring both accelerated learning expectations and a greater need to develop the capacity to learn in a variety of places and modalities. Lifelong learning will be nonnegotiable and our ability to adapt and continue to learn will arguably be just as important as any learning we have gained up to that point.

Who better to lead the way in an era of learning than teacher leaders?

#### **Trend #5: The Influence of Networks and Open Sourcing**

As teachers become more adept at networking, it is likely that national and international cohorts of teachers who serve students at similar points in their development will come together to share ideas, resources, and key innovations. In business and the world of software development, they refer to

this practice as open sourcing, wherein challenges or problems are shared in an open “space” and innovations and solutions are offered and debated with fellow professionals. With technology today, those connections could be made down the hall or across the world. The influence of networks and open sourcing will help the teaching profession to continue to evolve in an organic fashion with teachers leading the way thanks to collaboration.

### **Trend #6: The Emerging Learning Needs of Teachers Who Are Digital Natives**

Increasingly, P-12 education will be dominated by teachers who, by one definition or another, are digital natives. Fewer and fewer of us will have grown up without handheld devices and the Internet as constant companions.

People who have grown up with digital sensibilities face innovation and the challenges of change with a much different perspective on solutions than their predecessors. Digital natives are highly collaborative and willing to get input from multiple sources when making a decision. They don't toil away in isolation and are willing to use technology to manage laborious tasks, freeing them to provide interventions at critical learning points.

The emergence of digital natives has created somewhat of a chasm between those who grew up digital and those who didn't. Leaders in schools today can certainly feel this disconnect and the challenges that are created as a result. Teacher leadership will be important in helping these diverse populations work together effectively as they learn from one another and reflect on best practices and approaches from both the digital-native and digital-immigrant perspectives.



## ORGANIZATION AND APPLICATION OF THE BOOK

This book was designed with the busy working professional in mind. We have created simple and clear symbolic representations that we hope will help you remember the content. Each chapter begins with a brief, focused definition of one teacher leader type. We cover the rationale and advantages of each model early in each chapter and then address the specific challenges teacher leaders face when they promote this image of teacher leadership.

Each chapter ends with clear and actionable steps to take to promote and implement this type of teacher leadership in your school and within your own professional practice. Included are steps you can take on your own, as well as ideas you and your colleagues may embrace to make an evolved notion of teacher leadership a significant part of your professional lives.